

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Rehabilitation of Highway 62 West Crater Lake National Park

PURPOSE AND NEED FOR ACTION

The National Park Service proposes to rehabilitate and reconstruct portions of Highway 62 *West*, starting at Milepost (MP) 65.5 and ending at NIP 73.2, within Crater Lake National Park, Klamath County, Oregon. This approximately 7.7-mile (approximately 12.5 km) road segment begins at the western boundary of the park to its terminus near Annie Springs Junction, the turn-off for Annie Springs (south) entrance station. The road segment is reaching the end of its 25-year design life—the pavement is cracking and potholing, and has inadequate surface and subsurface drainage. Additionally, the two switchback curves have operational design deficiencies impeding snow removal, and Whitehorse Crossing contains a blind curve creating a driving hazard.

Accidents occur generally along *two* segments of the project corridor. One segment is referred to as Whitehorse Crossing (MIP 69.5 to MP 69.7), and the other is a section of road that contains two relatively severe switchbacks (MP 71.1 to MP 71.7). The road in the Whitehorse Crossing segment gains elevation over a small hill on the west side of a curve, creating a visual barrier to the upcoming (blind) curve. Eastbound drivers cannot see the curve and occasionally fail to reduce vehicle speed, resulting in single vehicle accidents, some of which involve vehicle roll-over.

The two switchbacks along the second segment of road (NIP 71.1 to MP 71.7) contain the narrowest turning radii of the portion of Highway 62 West that is within the proposed project area. The majority of accidents on this segment are single vehicle accidents that involve loss of control while attempting to negotiate the switchbacks during snowy conditions, usually resulting in vehicle contact with the guardrail and/or snow bank. These types of accidents are seldom reported; however, dents in the guardrails, imprints in the snow banks, and remnants of automobile bumpers, grills, and lights observed in the area suggest that these types of accidents occur fairly frequently. Other accidents associated with these switchbacks include two-vehicle, head-on collisions and side-swipes resulting from loss of vehicle control. Although major accidents of this type are relatively infrequent, some of these accidents have resulted in personal injuries and serious damage to the vehicles involved (park accident reports 1996—1999).

Crater Lake National Park receives an average of 522 inches of snow each winter. Due to the tightness of the turns in the switchbacks, the push snowplow used by park

maintenance staff often cannot maintain the necessary speed to push and lift snow off the road. As the snowplow operator attempts to push the snow off the road, the resistance from the snow pushes the plow, forcing it into the other lane and oncoming vehicles, thus creating a safety hazard. In many cases, snowplow operators must use multiple approaches along this road segment to fully clear the road or use the rotary plow more frequently and earlier in or later into the season, resulting in inefficiencies in snow removal through the switchbacks.

The access drive leading from Highway 62 West to the Pacific Crest Trail parking lot is at an approximate 45-degree angle to the road, making it difficult for vehicles pulling trailers to enter and exit the lot onto and off of the highway. Three existing turnouts are substandard, and another is seldom used.

SELECTED ACTION

The National Park Service's selected action (resurfacing, rehabilitation, and realignment of Highway 62 West Entrance) is alternative C and the preferred alternative in the environmental assessment. A complete description of alternative C (the preferred alternative) is on pages 22-23 of the environmental assessment.

The selected action will improve poor pavement conditions, restore adequate drainage, and improve sight distances. New traffic control and informational signage will be installed, culverts will be cleaned, and guardrails will be replaced or added as determined necessary. With the exception of the Whitehorse Creek segment, the switchbacks and access road to the Pacific Crest Trail parking lot (addressed below), the roadway will be improved within the existing road alignment; no widening will take place. Three existing turnouts will be modified to improve resource conditions or visitor use.

At Whitehorse Crossing, the hill profile will be reduced (flatten the road) to increase sight distance, the super-elevation of the curve will be raised to help keep vehicles in the roadway, the horizontal alignment will be improved for safety, and additional signage will be installed. Cut and fill slopes will be steepened in this area from 1:3 to 1:2. This will keep new disturbance to a minimum, avoid snags (dead trees used by wildlife species as habitat) and large trees, and prevent the placement of fill into the ephemeral Whitehorse Creek.

The switchbacks will be realigned to increase turning radii and sight distance. The centerline of the lower curve will be moved approximately 164 feet (50 meters) to the west, and the centerline of the upper curve will shift approximately 150 feet (45 meters) to the east. The road grade will be maintained at approximately 6.5%. The abandoned road alignment will be restored to natural contours and revegetated. Along the upper switchback (southern switchback) the slope will be steepened to 1

.5:1 to avoid the revetment wall, otherwise the slope will remain at 2:1. Tree wells will be installed around six trees over 10-feet tall (Western pine (*P. monuicola*) or Sugar pine (*P. lambertiana*), at or near the toe of the fill slope to protect them.

At The Pacific Crest trailhead, the access drive will be realigned to the west to create a perpendicular (“T”) intersection with Highway 62 West. The parking lot and drive will be resurfaced and graded for drainage with a 4- to 6-inch aggregate cover. The abandoned portion of the access drive will be restored to natural contours and revegetated.

The Highway 62 West rehabilitation project will begin in May 2004, or as soon as the road is clear of snow. The construction season is generally May through October. It is anticipated that the project will take two seasons to complete, possibly three, including revegetation efforts. However, construction could be delayed by weather conditions, available funding, or other unexpected events. Highway 62 West will remain open during construction, but traffic control will be necessary and delays of 20 to 30 minutes could occur.

OTHER ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

Alternative “B”, considered and analyzed in detail in the environmental assessment, included all of the recommendations for improvement as stated in the preferred alternative, except for the realignment of the switchbacks. Under this alternative, the tight radii of the switchbacks would remain as they are today. This option is not the preferred alternative because a considerable number of the vehicles traveling the highway are large or lengthy, and often encounter operational hazards while negotiating the switchbacks. This alternative did not fully address the purpose and need for the proposed project.

The no-action alternative, alternative “A”, would not meet the project objectives of providing a reliable, safe roadway, improve poor pavement conditions, reduce accidents, improve vehicle mobility through blind spots or tight curves on the highway, rehabilitate deteriorated and inadequate drainage Facilities, improve vehicle mobility in the Pacific Crest Trail parking area, or improve resource conditions or visitor use at designated turnouts.

RATIONAL FOR SELECTED ACTION

The selected action meets the project objectives of improving traffic safety on Highway 62 West and providing the best improvements for snow removal operations. As summarized in the following sections, the selected action (preferred alternative) also best meets the criteria in Section 101 of the National Environmental Policy Act for the environmentally preferred alternative; and, after consideration of effects described in the environmental assessment, there are no significant impacts to

the human environment as defined by criteria in 40 CFR 1508.27.

ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

The environmentally preferred alternative is determined by applying criteria identified in Section 1.01 of the National Environmental Policy Act to each alternative considered. In accordance with National Environmental Policy Act, the environmentally preferred alternative will best:

1. Fulfill the responsibilities of each generation as trustee of the environment for succeeding generations.
2. Ensure for all Americans safe, healthful, productive, and esthetically and culturally pleasing surroundings,
3. Attain the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment without degradation, risk of health or safety, or other undesirable and unintended consequences.
4. Preserve important historic, cultural, and natural aspects of our national heritage and maintain, wherever possible, an environment that supports diversity and variety of individual choice.
5. Achieve a balance between population and resource use that will permit high standards of living and a wide sharing of life's amenities.
6. Enhance the quality of renewable resources and approach the maximum attainable recycling of depletable resources.

The environmentally preferred alternative is the National Park Service preferred alternative and selected action. This alternative meets the provisions above as evidenced below.

1. *Fulfilling the responsibilities of each generation as trustee of the environment for succeeding generations:* Alternative C will repair the West Entrance into Crater Lake National Park within the existing road alignment, except in the area of the switchbacks and at Whitehorse Creek, where there will be adjustments to the alignment to improve visitor safety. This alternative will improve safe year-round access to the park, enabling the National Park Service to meet its mission to interpret resources at the park and facilitate an understanding of and appreciation for park resources.
2. *Ensure for all Americans safe, healthful, productive, and esthetically and culturally pleasing surroundings:* The scenic and natural quality of the road corridor will be maintained while providing for safer access to the park.

Actions associated with alternative C will allow for improved sight distance and safer egress of the Pacific Crest Trail parking lot and at turnouts. The radii of the switchbacks will be increased and, at Whitehorse Crossing, the hill will be flattened allowing for greater sight distance to the upcoming curve, possibly resulting in a reduction in the number and severity of accidents.

3. *Attain the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment with our degradation, risk of health or safety, or other undesirable and unintended consequences:* The long-term effects of the actions prescribed in alternative C will benefit human health and safety, visitor experience, park operations, and biotic habitat, while minimally affecting vegetation, geology, and soils. There are no other long-term effects. Moreover, mitigation strategies and best management practices ensure that any unanticipated effects to resources be minimized, if not eliminated.
4. *Preserve important historic, cultural, and natural aspects of our national heritage and maintain, wherever possible, an environment that supports diversity and variety of individual choice:* Habitat will be improved with alternative C and there are no cultural resources affected by the project.
5. *Achieve a balance between population and resource use that will permit high standards of living and a sharing of life's amenities:* Alternative C does not affect socioeconomic resources. Moreover, the resources for which the park was established are protected, while allowing for safer, potentially more pleasurable, access to the park and appreciation of park resources.
6. *Enhance the quality of renewable resources and approach the maximum attainable recycling of depletable resources:* National Park Service policy requires “the use of biodegradable materials, the re-use and recycling of materials, and other appropriate measures to minimize [waste], and to conserve natural resources to the fullest extent possible.” Alternative C adheres to this policy. For example, all removed trees 8-inches in diameter will be saved and stockpiled to be used as trail features such as bridges, railings, benches, and signs, and best management practices for preventing or reducing nonpoint source pollution into drainages and of minimizing soil loss and sedimentation will be implemented.

Alternative A and B do not meet the six criteria above as completely as alternative C.

Although alternative A would result in no new impacts to the biological and physical environment, it would not attain the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment within the park (Criteria 3). It could have undesirable consequences on human safety because hazardous road conditions would not be improved and the safety of the visiting public and park employees would be reduced (Criteria 3). If the road was not rehabilitated and reconstructed, park operations could be adversely impacted because difficulty in snow removal would continue (Criteria 2 and 3).

Alternative B would address the safety and operational problems associated with Whitehorse Crossing (the hill would be flattened allowing for greater sight distance) and the Pacific Crest trailhead parking lot. However, it would not address the safety issues associated with the switchback~. Therefore, alternative C provides for more safety and improved sight distances (Criteria 2 and 3).

MITIGATION

Mitigation measures have been incorporated into the selected action (preferred alternative) to reduce impacts. Mitigation measures include clearly defining construction zones; avoiding introduction of non-native species; best management practices to minimize erosion, sedimentation, noise, and dust emissions; blending cut areas into natural environment; and minimizing new disturbance.

Mitigation measures for rehabilitation of Highway 62 West are included in the matrix below:

Impact Topic	Mitigation Measure	Responsibility
Threatened and Endangered Species, Species of Concern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction noise will be minimized to curtail disturbance of endangered species, particularly Northern spotted owls at the owl activity center. 	Contractor
Soils and Geology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cut and fill slopes will be roughened and revegetated to blend into the natural environment. 	Park/Contractor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highway 62 West improvements will be limited to the minimum corridor necessary for a safe driving experience 	Park/Contrator
Visitor Use and Highway Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> During construction, Crater Lake National Park visitors will be routed away from construction areas. Barricades will be placed around construction areas to prevent visitor entry. 	Contractor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highway 62 West may be closed temporarily (for periods of no longer than 30 minutes). Signs will be posted for several miles outside the park alerting visitors of the construction and the possibility of up to 30-minute delays. 	Contractor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction will not be allowed on holidays or weekends unless approved in advance by the park superintendent. 	Contractor
Air Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Motorists will be requested to turn off engines to eliminate motor vehicle emissions. 	Contractor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water will be sprinkled to reduce dust during construction activities. 	Contractor

Cultural Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Park Service will use archeological monitors, as necessary in the project area, to avoid disturbance of any as yet unknown cultural resources. 	Park/Contractor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If the highway design changes from the preliminary proposed alignment, the project will be halted and park cultural resources staff notified for appropriate action. 	Park/Contractor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If during construction, previously undiscovered archeological resources are discovered, all work in the immediate vicinity of the discovery would be halted until the resources could be identified and documented and an appropriate mitigation strategy developed, if necessary, in consultation with the Oregon SHPO. In the unlikely event that human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, or objects of cultural patrimony are discovered during construction, provisions outlined in the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 would be followed. 	Park/Contractor
Noise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State-of-the-art noise reduction technology will be used on construction equipment to the maximum extent practicable. 	Contractor
Biotic Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up to six trees over 10-feet tall located at or near the toe of the fill slopes would be protected with tree wells and six to eight trees under 10-feet tall would be saved for transplanting. 	Park/Contractor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revegetation work will use topsoil conserved along the corridor and seeds or propagules from native species. 	Park/Contractor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No Imported topsoil, forest duff, or hay bales will be used during revegetation in an effort to avoid introduction of non-native plant species 	Contractor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undesirable plant species will be monitored and control strategies Initiated if these species occur. 	Park
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To prevent the introduction of and to minimize the spread of non-native vegetation and noxious weeds, the following measures will be implemented wherever possible; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimize soil disturbance Pressure-wash all construction equipment before it is brought into Crater Lake National Park Limit vehicle parking to existing roads, parking lots, or the access route. Obtain aggregate from solid rock or deep layers of the Wizard III quarry site to avoid material potentially contaminated with weed seeds and reduce the potential introduction of non-native species. Obtain additional topsoil and forest duff from the project area Revegetate all disturbed sites immediately 	Park/Contractor

	<p>following construction activities by spreading soil and duff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Monitor all disturbed areas for two to three years following construction to identify noxious weeds or non-native vegetation. The treatment of non-native vegetation will be completed in accordance with NPS-13, Integrated Pest Management Guidelines. Salvaged soil and duff will be stored at temporary staging areas on existing turnouts within the corridor. 	
General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replacement of soil will include spreading, scarification, mulching, and seeding and/or planting species native to the immediate area. Further treatments may include covering the soil with duff and woody litter. 	Park/Contractor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field surveys for assessing revegetation needs will be performed within the Highway 62 West corridor to create an applicable revegetation plan. 	Park
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction limits will be clearly marked with ribbons and stakes prior to the beginning of ground disturbing activities. No disturbance will occur beyond these limits. Temporary construction fence will be installed where determined necessary by Federal Highway Administration and National Park Service project coordinators. 	Contractor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both the designs and colors of construction materials will blend into the surroundings. 	Contractor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All removed trees 8-inches in diameter at breast height will be saved and stockpiled to be used as trail features such as bridges, railings, benches, signs, etc. 	Contractor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cut and fill slopes in the Whitehorse Creek area will be steepened from 1:3 to 1:2 to keep new disturbance to a minimum, avoid snags (dead trees used by wildlife species as habitat) and large trees, and prevent the placement of fill into the ephemeral Whitehorse Creek. 	Park/Contractor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior to construction, the construction zone will be surveyed and construction tape, snow fencing, or some similar border material will be installed along the wilderness boundary. No construction, work, movement, or other activity will be allowed beyond the border material into proposed wilderness lands. 	Contractor
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sediment traps, erosion check structures, and/or filters would be considered. Best management practices are means of preventing or reducing nonpoint source pollution into drainages and of minimizing soil loss and sedimentation. Best management practices would include all or some of the following features, depending on site-specific requirements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Locating excavated materials outside of drainages to avoid sedimentation. ○ Conducting regular site inspections throughout 	Contractor

	<p>the construction period to ensure that erosion-control measures were properly installed and function effectively.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Armoring (with large rock and boulders) slopes that exceed 2:1 to reduce or prevent erosion. ○ Properly storing, using, and disposing of chemicals, fuels, and other toxic materials. ○ Refueling construction equipment in upland areas only to prevent fuel spills near water resources. 	
--	---	--

WHY THE SELECTED ACTION (PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE) WILL NOT HAVE A SIGNIFICANT EFFECT ON THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

As defined in 40 CFR §1508.27, significance is determined by examining the following criteria:

Impacts that may have both beneficial and adverse aspects and which on balance may be beneficial, but that may still have significant adverse impacts which require analysis in an EIS: No major adverse or beneficial impacts were identified that would require analysis in an environmental impact statement. Impacts that may have both beneficial and adverse aspects and which on balance may be beneficial, but, that may still have significant adverse impacts which require analysis in an EIS: No major adverse or beneficial impacts were identified that would require analysis in an environmental impact statement.

The selected action (preferred alternative) will have no or negligible impacts on wilderness values, floodplains, water quality, historic structures, archeological resources, Indian trust resources, scenic resources, wetlands, prime and unique farmlands, threatened and endangered species, ecologically critical areas, environmental justice, socioeconomic environment, and lightscapes. Short-term, negligible to minor, adverse impacts on biotic communities, soils and geology, air quality, traffic, and visitor use will result during road reconstruction activities. There will be short-term, negligible to minor impacts to soundscapes and noise. At one location, Pacific Crest trailhead, noise impacts will be very short term, adverse, and minor to moderate. Short-term, negligible, beneficial effects to safety will result during road reconstruction activities. Long-term adverse impacts to biotic communities, soils, and geology will be negligible or minor. Long-term beneficial effects to park maintenance operations, some biotic communities, visitor use, traffic, and safety will be negligible to minor.

Degree of effect on public health or safety: During construction, visitor experience will be adversely affected by noise, dust, fumes, delays, increased congestion, and construction vehicle traffic along this section of Highway 62 West. Some visitors will be dissatisfied because they will be unable to visit a particular feature or features due to road reconstruction actions, work on parking lots, and turnout closures. This will result in a short-term, negligible to minor, adverse impact. However, speeds will be reduced in construction zones, possibly reducing the number and severity of vehicle accidents in these segments, resulting in a short-term, negligible, beneficial effect on public health and safety.

Upon completion of the selected action (preferred alternative), the roadway will be of a consistent 22 feet wide with a new driving surface, with additional signage and appropriate guardrail installation, resulting in a long-term, negligible, beneficial effect.

The hill at Whitehorse crossing will be flattened allowing for greater sight distance to the upcoming curve, resulting in a long-term, negligible, beneficial effect,

The radii of the swirchbacks will be increased allowing for longer sight distances, possibly reducing the potential for loss of vehicle control and associated collisions. This will also result in a long-term, minor, beneficial effect.

The reconstruction will also allow for improved sight distance and safer egress of the Pacific Crest Trail parking lot and at remaining turnouts. This will result in a long-term, negligible, beneficial effect.

Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas: As described in the environmental assessment, wilderness values, wild and scenic rivers, prime and unique farmlands, floodplains, and ecologically critical areas will not be affected. There are no cultural landscape features or ethnographic resources identified in the project area that could be affected by current project actions.

There are no known archeological resources at the Pacific Crest trailhead parking lot, the area around turnout B, and a turnout to the west of Whitehorse Crossing, and therefore, no impacts are anticipated in these areas. At Whitehorse Creek, all known archeological resources will be avoided. Therefore, there will be no impacts to archeological resources,

After applying the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's criteria of adverse effect (36 CFR 800.5) the National Park Service proposes that implementing the selected action (preferred alternative) would result in a determination of ***no historic properties affected.***

Degree to which effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial: There were no highly controversial effects identified during either preparation of the environmental assessment or the public review period.

Degree to which the possible effects on the quality of the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks: There were no highly uncertain, unique or unknown risks identified during either preparation of the environmental assessment or the public review period.

Degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration: The selected action (preferred alternative) neither establishes a National Park Service precedent for future actions with significant effects nor represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.

Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts: Impacts to biotic communities, threatened and endangered species and species of concern, soils and geology, cultural resources, visitor use and highway safety, park operations, air quality, and soundscapes and noise were analyzed in the selected action (preferred alternative) of the environmental assessment.

As described in the environmental assessment, cumulative impacts were determined by combining the impacts of the selected action (preferred alternative) with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions. There were no past projects identified during scoping that have contributed to cumulative impacts. Present and future actions that may have potential to cumulatively impact resources include:

- planned prescribed burns (fire management)
- trails rehabilitation and relocation
- reconstruction of the Rim parking lot
- waterline replacement from Munson Springs to Garfield
- lagoon project at Munson Valley
- rehabilitation of superintendent's house

The negligible to moderate, adverse impacts of the selected action (preferred alternative), combined with impacts of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable actions, could result in negligible adverse cumulative impacts to biotic communities, soils, air quality, and soundscapes and noise.

Beneficial impacts of the preferred alternative, when combined with other past, present, and foreseeable future impacts, could result in net negligible beneficial effect on visitor use and highway safety, and minor beneficial effect on park.

Degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources: There are historic-period archeological Sites associated with segments of the **Fort Klamath-Jacksonville wagon road** located in the **vicinity** of the project corridor.

A contributing feature of the Fort Klamath-Jacksonville wagon road is located within the area of potential effect. This resource will be avoided through road design in the switchback segments by increasing the steepness of the slope for the fill on the upper (southern) switchback to 1.5:1. This road design will avoid the two 1911 road segments and the revetment wall resulting in no impacts to historic structures.

After applying the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's criteria of adverse effect (36 CFR 800.5) the National Park Service proposes that implementing the selected action (preferred alternative) would result in a determination of ***no historic properties affected***.

Degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its critical habitat: The threatened Northern spotted owl activity center located approximately 900 meters (2,953 feet) north of the highway (within or across the deep

Castle Creek Gorge) is screened from the highway by dense forest and has been active over many years while the highway has been in operation. Since the habitat in the project area is suitable for foraging, Northern spotted owls may use areas near the construction site to forage or rest, but no construction activities are proposed to take place after dusk. Construction noise will be minimized through best management practices, during daytime hours during the summer months, and is not expected to be constant in duration. The National Park Service determined that the selected action (preferred alternative) may affect, but is unlikely to adversely affect, threatened and endangered species.

Whether the action threatens a violation of federal, state, or local environmental protection law: The selected action (preferred alternative) violates no federal, state, or local environmental protection laws.

IMPAIRMENT OF PARK RESOURCES OR VALUES

In addition to reviewing the list of significance criteria, Crater Lake National Park determined that implementation of the selected action (preferred alternative) will not constitute an impairment of park resources and values. This conclusion is based on a thorough analysis of the impacts described in the environmental assessment, the agency and public comments received, and the professional judgment of the decision-maker in accordance with the *NPS Management Policies, 2001* (December 27, 2000). As described in the environmental assessment, implementation of the selected action (preferred alternative) will not result in major adverse impacts to a resource or value whose conservation is (1) necessary to fulfill specific purposes identified in the establishing legislation or proclamation of Crater Lake National Park; (2) key to the natural or cultural integrity of the park; or (3) identified as a goal in the park's *General Management Plan* or other relevant National Park Service planning documents.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND AGENCY CONSULTATION

A press release initiated public scoping at the beginning of the project from June 26 through July 26, 2002. Comments were solicited to determine potential issues and alternatives for the proposed project. Letters were sent to tribes and agencies on July 3, 2002. No comments were received during the scoping period.

The environmental assessment was made available for public review and comment during a 30-day period ending September 22, 2003. A press release announcing the document's availability was sent to the park's mailing list, and copies of the environmental assessment were made available at the park. Approximately 100 environmental assessments were distributed during the comment period. An electronic copy of the environmental assessment was also placed on the park's Web site. No public scoping meetings were held regarding the project.

The National Park Service received eleven letters commenting on the environmental

assessment: eight were from private citizens; one was from the Douglas County Planning Department, Douglas County, Oregon; and one from the Mt. Hood Snowmobile Club, Boring, Oregon. Three commentors supported Alternative B, six commentors supported the Preferred Alternative, Alternative C, and two commentors expressed no preference. No substantive comments objecting to the preferred alternative were received.

The Federal Highway Administration administers a coordinated federal lands program including park roads. The Rehabilitation Highway 62 West will be funded through the Federal Lands Highway Program. The Federal Highway Administration, Western Federal Lands Highway Division, is a cooperating agency on the design of the project and the preparation of the environmental assessment.

Compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act was completed through consultation with the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office. The State Historic Preservation Office determined that the selected action (preferred alternative) will have *no historic properties effected* on identified historic architectural resources or archeological resources (letter from Sarah Jalving, Review and Compliance Specialist, Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, State Historic Preservation Office, August 19, 2003).


Compliance with section 7(c) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, was completed through consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service sent a letter of concurrence on the determination that the project may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect, the federally threatened Northern spotted owl (September 5, 2002).

CONCLUSION

The selected action (preferred alternative) does not constitute an action that normally requires preparation of an environmental impact statement. The selected action (preferred alternative) will not have a significant effect on the human environment. Negative environmental impacts that could occur are negligible or minor in intensity. Mitigation measures will be incorporated into the selected action (preferred alternative) to reduce or eliminate impacts. In general, the public supports the selected action and no substantive comments were received from the public or agencies. There are no foreseen significant adverse impacts on public health, public safety, threatened or endangered species, historic properties either listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, or other unique characteristics of the region. No highly uncertain or controversial impacts, unique or unknown risks, significant cumulative effects, or elements of precedence were identified. Implementation of the action will not violate any federal, state, or local environmental protection law.

Based on the foregoing, it has been determined that an environmental impact statement is not required for this project and thus will not be prepared.

Recommended:

 9/29/03
Date

Charles V. Lundy
Superintendent, Crater Lake National Park

Approved:



Jonathan B. Jarvis, Regional Director
Pacific West Region, National Park Service

9/30/03

Date